

apparent impunity. I note with relief that he uses them in weak solution and sparingly, but I remain alarmed, nevertheless, and just a little shocked. What of the urethral haemorrhage which even the most careful of us are bound to produce with our catheters from time to time? Is not the danger of cocaine and adrenaline much greater in an oozing urethra? Perhaps I am wrong; or, there again, perhaps Mr. Loughnane never makes his patients bleed.

Mr. Loughnane also states that endoscopic resection is the operation of choice for prostatic obstruction. I should be interested to know if he would advocate this method in preference to Harris's closed method in the treatment of the robust, clean, early case of general enlargement.

I must apologize to Mr. Loughnane for plying him with so many questions, but there are perhaps other young men who, like myself, become a little confused when our seniors disagree over little things which mean much to their juniors.—I am, etc.,

Royal Naval Hospital,
Chatham, June 6th.

JACK L. S. COULTER,
Surgeon Lieutenant R.N.

Iodine Locket

SIR,—One frequently hears of superstitious and faddy people wearing charms to ward off disease, varying from purely luck-bringing articles to those of some possible medical advantage. The list ranges through silk tied round the abdomen and nutmeg hung around the chest to ward off rheumatism down to the iodine locket to combat possible "sepsis." It is about the latter that we wish to write, as we have not yet heard of a similar result from the wearing of one.

On March 28th a girl, aged 9, was treated by one of us (MacF.) for a prod from a rusty nail on the calf of the leg. Tincture of iodine was applied. On March 30th the girl returned with a diffuse dermatitis extending for a radius of six inches round the site of the wound. This girl, being a tomboy and frequently in trouble, has been treated many times previously by both of us for cuts, etc., and has never shown any iodine reaction before. Some interval, however, had elapsed between this injury and the last. The mother was equally certain that the child had never reacted to iodine before, and, in fact, was now wearing an iodine locket. The locket was duly exposed, and underneath it on the child's chest was a ring of dermatitis, corresponding to the locket in size and shape, with markings corresponding to the apertures in the locket. This cleared up almost at once, but it was two months before the leg healed. The child had been wearing the locket for about a month, and there seems no other explanation than that sufficient iodine was absorbed from this to cause any further absorption to be beyond the limit of safety.

Are there any records of a similar case?—We are, etc.,

L. R. S. MACFARLANE, M.B., Capt. R.A.M.C.

H. W. DAUKES, M.R.C.P., Capt. R.A.M.C.

Victoria Barracks, Belfast, June 19th.

Treatment of Warts

SIR,—Apropos of Dr. Ingram's letter regarding the treatment of warts, the following story will, I think, confirm his statement that psychotherapy can on occasions cause their complete disappearance.

About two years ago a small girl was brought to see me because she was suffering from a large number of warts on both hands. The warts were very big, and caused a great deal of disfigurement. I was somewhat perplexed as to the best method of treating them, and eventually decided to try the application of carbon dioxide snow. In view of the number and size of the warts I quite realized that this method of treatment was bound to be long and painful. After two treatments the child ceased to attend, and when last seen there was little or no improvement in the condition.

Six months afterwards she happened to come to my house with a message, and I took the opportunity of asking her to let me see her hands. I was astonished to see that the warts had completely disappeared, and that her hands were perfectly normal in every way. On asking her how the cure had been brought about she volunteered the information that Mrs. X. had charmed them away. The child's mother confirmed the story, and she told me that Mrs. X. had not actually seen the child, but when approached in the matter had told her that the child need not worry as the warts would soon disappear when she had charmed them. As Mrs. X. happened to be a patient of mine, the next time that I saw her I questioned her about the matter. She was perfectly frank with me, and gave me a detailed account of how she had gone about the business. She emphatically denied that she had seen the child, or that she had sent anything to be actually applied to the warts. She had carried out certain rites and then wished for the warts to disappear—with the above-mentioned result.

—I am, etc.,

June 8th.

CENTURION.

Swallowed Foreign Bodies

SIR,—This subject of swallowed foreign bodies has interested me for years in connexion with the swallowing of swords, of chunks of broken glass, of prickly-pear leaves, and of many other impossible substances by Eastern fakirs. Dr. R. Stewart Kennedy's case (*Journal*, June 22nd, p. 1262), though of very great interest, is not a record either as to numbers or, I think, as to bulk. The following references, both from the *Times*, may interest your readers.

In February, 1933, a man of no fixed abode and of burglarious habits swallowed six dessert spoons, two teaspoons, a length of chain, a piece of tin 7 inches long, a bell-push, and some screws. X-ray examination confirmed the presence of the articles, which had been in the man's stomach for three months. The police were anxious to recover the property, but though he felt ill he refused to have them removed.

If I may be permitted the slang, the cake is taken by a maiden lady of 35, who got a job in the hardware department of a Manhattan store, where she was employed for a week. There were in her collection 728 tacks, 132 screws, a collapsible coat-hanger, 77 bolts, 89 pieces of glass, and a miscellany of other things, bringing the total up to 1,203 items of hardware. She said she had swallowed them in order to be funny, a somewhat perverted form of humour, but not bad going for a week's work. The operation was successful.

Those who are interested in the subject will find more about it in my book *The Myth of the Mystic East*, published last September by Blackwood.—I am, etc.,

London, W.1, June 22nd.

R. H. ELLIOT, late I.M.S.

Bound Volumes of the Journal

SIR,—In reference to the appeal which you allowed me to make through your columns last week for certain missing volumes of the *British Medical Journal* to complete the set for presentation to the British Post-Graduate Medical School, we have received, by the courtesy of Mr. J. B. Oldham, F.R.C.S., Honorary Librarian of the Medical Institution, Liverpool, the volumes for 1856–1865 (with the exception of 1860 and 1862 (i)), and Dr. H. L. Cronk, medical officer of health for Hampshire, has kindly presented the four volumes for 1866 and 1867. There now remain to be obtained only the volumes for 1860 and 1862 (i), and if any member or hospital librarian could present these the Library Subcommittee would be deeply grateful.—I am, etc.,

June 24th.

C. O. HAWTHORNE,
Chairman, Library Subcommittee, B.M.A.